
**Graphic technology — Process control
for the production of half-tone colour
separations, proofs and production
prints —**

**Part 6:
Flexographic printing**

*Technologie graphique — Contrôle des processus de confection de
sélections couleurs tramées, d'épreuves et de tirages —*

Partie 6: Processus flexographique



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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Contents

	Page
Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	2
4 Requirements	2
4.1 General.....	2
4.2 Material input requirements.....	3
4.2.1 General.....	3
4.2.2 Distortion correction.....	3
4.2.3 Proof requirements.....	3
4.2.4 Digital data files.....	3
4.2.5 Film/printing forme requirements.....	4
4.3 Printing aims.....	5
4.3.1 General.....	5
4.3.2 Halftoning parameters.....	6
4.3.3 Print substrates.....	6
4.3.4 Ink set colours.....	7
4.3.5 Reproducibility of ink colour set.....	8
4.3.6 Ink set gloss.....	8
4.3.7 Tolerance for image positioning.....	9
4.3.8 Tone value increase (TVI).....	9
4.3.9 Reproducibility of printing.....	9
5 Communication	9
Annex A (normative) Communication of spot colour data	11
Annex B (informative) Information exchange	12
Annex C (informative) Determination of quality parameters of half-tone dots on a colour separation film	14
Bibliography	16

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 130, *Graphic technology*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 12647-6:2012), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates the Amendment ISO 12647-6:2012/Amd 1:2015.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- the intent of the document has been changed from a process control definition to a specification of the way to exchange the information necessary to define the printing characteristics of the desired product. To do this, it has built on colour management technology and the exchange of colour characterization data.

A list of all parts in the ISO 12647 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Historically, the ISO 12647 series of International Standards established the process control parameters and their aim values and tolerances for the most important professional printing processes of the graphic arts industry. The initial concept was that the groundwork for the series was laid down in ISO 12647-1. This document differs from that concept because flexographic printing has changed significantly since the ISO 12647 series was initially conceived.

This current edition differs from the earlier edition by not defining specific printing condition aims, but instead requiring that a specific reference printing condition (characterization data set) be specified. Flexographic printing differs from other printing procedures by using a variety of printing machine architectures, ink sequence, ink types, anilox rollers, substrate types, etc. Each of these involve different printing condition and process control aims. This document requires that the colour of the printed product match a characterization data set or a printing condition agreed upon by the provider and the receiver. It specifies minimum requirements and tolerances to be communicated and produced.

The purpose of a proof is to simulate the visual characteristics of the finished printed product as closely as possible, which often becomes a contractual agreement between the provider and the receiver. ISO 12647-7 defines a process where colour characterization data are used to produce a contract proof.

Defined output intent should be a smooth data set, it is recommended to use an industry accepted Reference characterization data set. The use of a data set from an old flexographic press results in a lumpy characterization data, and consequently problematic transforms. The goal for most packaging is to render all print to a similar appearance, typically the same aim reference characterization data set is used for flexographic, offset, gravure, and digital printing.

This market also uses colour proofing on electronic displays. The International Standards for colour proofing on electronic displays are ISO 14861 and ISO 12646.

Spot colour management is defined in this document to utilize spectral data in an XML schema defined by ISO 17972-4. ISO 17972-4 includes exchange specifications for spot colour characterization data to facilitate the communication of spot colour data.

There are many cases in this document where the provider and the receiver communicate. Modern flexography has the capability to align with most other printing aims, however there are some conditions based on substrate, applications, printing forme technology where aligning to providers aims cannot be met. [Table 5](#) list all attributes that should be discussed for these exceptions.

Graphic technology — Process control for the production of half-tone colour separations, proofs and production prints —

Part 6: Flexographic printing

1 Scope

This document specifies the requirements for the exchange of data and information necessary for the definition of the aims for four-colour flexographic printing of packaging and publication materials, including newsprint. It is based on the use of colour characterization data to define the colourimetric printing aims and includes appropriate assignment of responsibility for and recommended tolerances on critical parameters of the flexographic printing process.

This document is directly applicable to:

- publication flexographic printing including magazines, catalogues and commercial materials and packaging flexographic printing including labels, boxes, and flexible packages;
- half-tone and continuous tone proofing processes that predict the colourimetric results of flexographic printing.

Guidance is also provided concerning the definition of spot colours used in flexographic printing.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 5-3, *Photography and graphic technology — Density measurements — Part 3: Spectral conditions*

ISO 2813, *Paints and varnishes — Determination of gloss value at 20°, 60° and 85°*

ISO/TS 10128, *Graphic technology — Methods of adjustment of the colour reproduction of a printing system to match a set of characterization data*

ISO 12647-7, *Graphic technology — Process control for the production of halftone colour separations, proof and production prints — Part 7: Proofing processes working directly from digital data*

ISO 13468-1, *Plastics — Determination of the total luminous transmittance of transparent materials — Part 1: Single-beam instrument*

ISO 13468-2, *Plastics — Determination of the total luminous transmittance of transparent materials — Part 2: Double-beam instrument*

ISO 13655, *Graphic technology — Spectral measurement and colorimetric computation for graphic arts images*

ISO 14782, *Plastics — Determination of haze for transparent materials*

ISO 17223, *Plastics — Determination of yellowness index and change in yellowness index*

ISO 17972-1, *Graphic technology — Colour data exchange format — Part 1: Relationship to CxF3 (CxF/X)*

ISO 17972-4, *Graphic technology — Colour data exchange format (CxF/X) — Part 4: Spot colour characterisation data (CxF/X-4)*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online Browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

fringe width

size of fuzzy area to the outside of an imaged halftone dot

3.2

printing forme

cylinder or sleeve covered with a relief type rubber or photopolymer plate for application of printing ink to print substrate

[SOURCE: ISO 2834-2:2007, 3.3, modified — The original term was "printing forme for flexography".]

3.3

provider

organization that prepares the data for printing, distributor of a digital data file, designer, consumer products company or trade shop

3.4

receiver

organization that receives the file, or to whom a digital data file is delivered,

Note 1 to entry: In the context of this document, usually a prepress company, printer or converter.

3.5

replacement colour

spot colour (3.7) used, with altered separations, in place of a process colour

3.6

screen ruling

number of image elements, such as dots or lines, per unit of length in the direction which produces the highest value

3.7

spot colour

non-process colour that is used in addition to, or in place of, a process colour and is normally applied with a single impression

Note 1 to entry: When associated with a corporate product identity, a spot colour is also known as brand colour.

4 Requirements

4.1 General

In all cases, digital data files, colour separation film sets or printing formes delivered for printing shall be accompanied by a contract proof or a soft proof unless there is an agreement between all parties concerned that soft proof may be used or that no proof is required. If delivered, the contract proof shall